

THE

INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION OF 1851.

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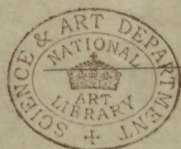
A FEW OBSERVATIONS

UPON

THE GENERAL ADVANTAGES WHICH MAY

BE EXPECTED TO ARISE FROM IT.

BY LOUIS ALEXIS CHAMEROVZOW.



LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, 30 WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE;
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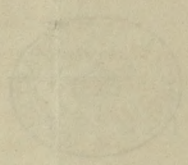
INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION OF 1851

A NEW OBSERVATION

THE GENERAL ADVANTAGES WHICH MAY

BE EXPECTED TO ARISE FROM IT

BY LOUIS ALEXIS CHAMBERLAIN



LONDON

W. M. WATTS, CROWN COURT, TEMPLE BAR

THE INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION OF 1851.

BEING A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON THE GENERAL ADVANTAGES
WHICH MAY BE EXPECTED TO ARISE FROM IT.

If it were asked, What is the distinguishing feature of the present age? the reply would undoubtedly be, Its practical character and tendencies. This fact forces itself upon our observation, under every variety of form, under every variation of circumstance. We cannot evade it, even if we would. It is the great brazen image of the nineteenth century, set up in the market-place of the nations. Its name is stamped in iron characters upon the front of our times. It looks down upon us from every elevation, compelling men to bow their heads in submission to its will; to concentrate their energies for the fulfilment of its behests. It is the creation of an irresistible power; the embodiment of an all-potent principle; the emanation of a despotic law: the Law of Progress.

The experience of modern times has contributed a wealthy harvest of illustrations to establish this fact. The most brilliant speculations of the younger centuries have come to be measured mathematically, and are reduced to their narrowest limits. The sublimest theories man's genius can devise, though, with their lustre, they may dazzle for a moment, yet if they abide not the test of practical usefulness, are at once and for ever banished from the living world of Science, or abandoned to dreamers. Industry closes the doors of her workshops against them; the Arts reject them as unsightly abortions. Even Poetry and Imagination stand spell-bound, suddenly arrested in their skyward flight by the potent voice of this restless spirit.

The Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, presents another and not the least remarkable example of the practical tendency of the age, whilst it likewise offers a notable illustration of the Law of Progress.

Owing to a variety of causes, many centuries elapsed before the nations of the earth became sufficiently well acquainted with one another to form a due estimation of the riches which they severally possessed, or a proper appreciation of the advantages of an exchange of commo-

dities, based upon a system of reciprocity. No sooner, however, did they acquire a knowledge of the natural productions of neighbouring and distant countries—imperfect though it was—than new and beautiful combinations sprang self-created from the genial soil of international intercourse, developing the resources of all to an extent until then unknown. Strifes checked, for a while, the lusty growth of this hopeful progeny; but like young trees, pregnant with bud and promise, and which an unkindly frost has nipped, they only awaited the sunshine to burst forth anew in healthy and vigorous shoots, teeming with fruit of grateful savour. That sunshine gleamed upon the nations at last; and forthwith Industry resumed her place in their busy midst, holding out to all, her toil-hardened hand, and inviting them to assemble in her halls.

One of the natural results of inter-national contentions was to create and foster inter-national jealousies. These were not confined in their effects to the sanguinary deeds of the battle-field, perpetuating actual animosities and exciting to future bitterness and hatred; nor to contempt for physical peculiarities, provoking odious and unjust comparisons, and engendering a brutal rivalry in violence. The same virulent poison insinuated itself into every artery and vein of the national body; tainting the History and disfiguring the Literature of the day; paralysing healthy industrial effort; retarding improvement; rendering invention abortive, and genius itself impotent to fulfil its lofty mission of blessing the multitudes of the Universe with increased comforts and enjoyments, and awakening their hearts to nobler aspirations.

But such an unwholesome state of inter-national relations could not maintain itself, from the moment that the impediments to inter-national development were removed, with the cause which called them into existence: a cause, indeed, at once self-destructive, and fatal to so iniquitous an antagonism. Thus, with the proclamation of the general Peace, a healthy re-action commenced, and Commerce, from being pent within irksome bounds, began to spread vigorously, seeking, at the same time, to emancipate itself from the trammels of monopoly and the fetters of restrictive duties. Since that period, it has gained more than one mighty victory over them, and attained to a marvellous degree of expansion. Industry and Invention have likewise not only kept pace with the increased demand for novelty, but have anticipated it, and recorded their noble achievements in indestructible monuments to the honour and the glory of human genius.

Again: the curiosity natural to man could not long remain inactive when the European and the Trans-Atlantic Continents were once thrown open to its avidity. Even through the darkness which enveloped the nations whilst they were engaged in the deadly struggle for a bootless supremacy, lynx-eyed Enterprise had caught partial but

dazzling glimpses of the choice productions of foreign lands, and in the very midst of the tumult of war, had already sought to secure them for the general good, whilst striving to promote individual or exclusive interests. The introduction of new products of industry or of nature, necessarily created new wants. It did more. It originated a craving after refinements and elegancies; materially contributing, in this wise, to correct the national taste; and to some extent, and by imperceptible degrees, changing the very habits of the people. Many luxuries formerly enjoyed only by the great, became necessities for the masses, and were not to be procured save from remote countries. Hence a keener appreciation of their mutual dependence rapidly developed itself among the nations, and they soon began to contemplate future contentions with increasing dread, because—apart from higher considerations—they threatened to rupture the new tie which bound men together, and to destroy the spirit of emulation that had sprung up amongst them, and was already yielding an abundant harvest. They now, too, began to suspect a truth of which they have since become convinced—that the true field for future inter-national struggles is the field of Industry, where the labourers may hope to receive their just meed of praise for the victory they shall have contributed to achieve, and to participate equally in its advantages, every man according to his merits. They also perceived and felt that each country and people possess their peculiar products, and are distinguished by their peculiar excellencies; and that on the ruder utilities of the one, the elegancies of the other might be grafted, with manifest advantage to all. With increasing knowledge and extended facilities of communication, the temptations and inducements to inter-national exchange became more numerous and irresistible, whilst the augmenting demand for all those commodities which conduce to the comfort and the convenience of life, or to the refinements of society, tended to uproot the selfish system that imposed onerous imposts upon daily necessities.

But notwithstanding the new and powerful impulse thus imparted to the commerce of the world, the old leaven still fermented in the mass, and ancient national prejudices seemed yet obstinately bent upon ministering to national selfishness. The master-pieces of handicraft, which clothed beauty in additional loveliness, might indeed be held up to admiration: the foreigner might even take advantage of the hospitality extended to him, to examine their texture and pronounce judgment upon their fabric; but the spirit of exclusiveness shut him out from all opportunity of vindicating the ability of his own countrymen to compete with foreign art and manufacture, even in those branches for which the general consent had awarded them the palm of excellence. Nevertheless, the law of progress silently, but not the less effectually, continued its operations; inspiring nations with an

earnest desire to draw closer the bonds that should unite them in human brotherhood; rousing statesmen and rulers to a higher appreciation of the noble purposes which the communities of the world were ordained to accomplish; and stirring up in the hearts of individual men, irresistible impulses to devise the means of extending and cementing inter-national fellowship.

That any design having this great end in view should be universal in its embrace, was a necessary condition of success. Without this element of universality, it would have neither embodied the aspirations of the age, its spirit, nor its requirements. Any similar project, partaking of the exclusive character peculiar to the quinquennial Exhibitions instituted by the French, however laudable for its usefulness, however indicative of progress, would have marked no era in the history of inter-national industry. It would have been only an effete plagiarism of a short-sighted policy; alike unworthy of the country which has given Free-trade to the world, and of the principles of which that measure is the exponent.

That such a design should be palpably practical, also, was a second element of success, not less essential and important than its vastness of comprehension. The doctrines that are preached with a zeal so untiring, by the disciples of the humanitarian school of philosophers, and the object of which is the promotion of universal peace, were not less true nor less practical more than eighteen centuries ago, when the Divine Incarnation walked in the form of man upon the earth, and propounded them in person, enveloped in their benignant majesty. If rulers, whilst individually professing the Christian religion, and thereby admitting unreservedly the soundness of the principles on which it is founded, have held aloof from adopting them as the basis of an inter-national legislation, it has not been because those principles were less practicable for nations than for individuals, but because legislators, and possibly even the masses of the people, have failed to realize their applicability to the actual condition of things. They fear all at once to renounce their old dependence upon force, for dependence upon the Creator, as a national safeguard against aggression from without or rebellion from within, lest national destruction should be the result. And this contingency of human weakness was foreseen and provided for by the Law of Progress, which has raised up men, not to make Christianity practical, but to adapt its practicableness to some specific requirement of the age, shadowing itself forth in the form of projects for inter-national arbitration and Congresses of Nations. In these, the unity of mankind and the fusion of nationalities have been the predominant ideas; and the time may not be remote in the great cycle of events, when the sublime humanity incorporated in those ideas shall become a felicitous reality, and lay the foundation of a new

era in the history of man. It is true that, notwithstanding the devotedness of its disciples, and the increasing strength they are gradually gathering around them in the conviction of the peoples of the earth, the fruition of this theory is slow. But its truth is recognised, nevertheless; its testimony too is received, and utterance is given to its language in regulating the living destinies of the toiling multitudes. There is also a ready acceptance accorded to any emanation of a kindred spirit which promises immediate and practical results, because it is an admitted truth, that whatever tends to draw nations into more intimate communication, is an actual progress made in inter-national instruction, and levels another stroke at the root of inter-national animosities.

Amongst the many projects identified with the grand idea of an inter-national fraternity, the Great Exhibition of the World's Industry stands pre-eminent. It is palpably an embodiment of pacific principles and tendencies; and it is no detraction to say, that its chief merit consists in its being a practical assertion of their truth and political soundness; whilst the advantages which may be expected to arise from it are exclusively of a character calculated to render those principles permanent.

The time for holding this mighty Industrial Congress is singularly propitious. At no previous period in the history of the world could representatives of all the peoples which inhabit it have congregated under one roof. They were severed by enmities which had become almost hereditary; by prejudices deep-rooted and obstinate; by ignorance of one another's resources, habits, customs, and feelings; by doubts, jealousies, and apprehensions; by political antipathies and commercial prepossessions; by religious fanaticisms; and, amongst other causes of alienation, by the difficulties and even the dangers of inter-national communication. A new generation, however, has sprung into existence; perhaps not altogether untinged with the prejudices of its forefathers, but indisputably advanced in intercourse with neighbouring and distant nations, and ardently desirous of enlarging it, from the additional knowledge it has acquired of them, and from a conviction of the numerous advantages to be mutually derived from a closer intimacy. Hence, ancient antipathies and animosities have been softened down almost to obliteration; confidence has resumed, in the national heart, the throne which suspicion and mistrust had usurped: and peoples and rulers have alike learnt, that the future happiness and prosperity of nations must depend upon the closeness of the bond that unites them.

As a spectacle, simply; a magnificent vindication of the dignity of labour; this grand Industrial Festival must assume a unique place in the annals of history. But its attractions as an Exhibition, however

great and numerous, however valuable, too, for the gratification of a laudable curiosity, are amongst the least, as they are the most vulgar of its merits. The multitude may possibly regard it only as a pageant; and in the vast assemblage of materials, raw and manufactured, orderly arranged under that stupendous roof, behold but an interesting show of the marvels of human handicraft. In the estimation of the thinking few, however, it possesses far worthier claims to public consideration. Its very projection announced an elevated purpose, and was of significant philosophical utility. The idea could not have emanated from a mind stereotyped in the mould of prejudice, or imbued with the bigotries of class, or unimpressed with the teachings of past ages and of our own portentous times. It was the conception of one keenly alive to the claims of the toiling millions; religiously sensible of the duties of the wealthy and the powerful, and of the potency of the example of station to encourage emulation in industry. Above all, it was the offspring of a large and benevolent philosophy, which, in the true spirit of progress, embracing the future with the present, dwelt less upon the new impulses so wondrous a display of the products of human invention would impart to manufactures and commerce, and to particular branches of the arts and sciences, than upon the vast moral influence it was calculated to exercise over the communities of the world, and the salutary political lessons it would inculcate for the regulation of the destinies of generations yet unborn.

But considered even as a spectacle, the Exhibition will be not only on a scale of vastness unparalleled, but also of a character unprecedented in interest. The structure itself, beneath the immense dome of which will be displayed the multitudinous products of the three natural kingdoms, and the varied uses to which man's ingenuity, spurred into exercise by the necessities of civilization, has applied them, may first claim rank as a marvel. Its colossal dimensions; the simplicity and novelty of its construction; its perfect strength, combined with its singular elegance of design; the harmony of its proportions, and its completeness for its purpose, cannot fail to arrest attention and to excite surprise, and must form a fruitful subject of admiring comment. From this theme the inquiring mind will naturally turn to investigate the wondrous history of its creation, and will herein discover abundant matter for contemplation. To such a one the edifice will present itself not simply as a master-piece of mechanical skill, but likewise as a monument illustrative of the character and the civilization of the day; as a triumphant record of the advance which the science of the sub-division of labour has made in modern times. The magical rapidity with which it has sprung into existence is eminently suggestive of the active and enterprising spirit of the century. Indeed, the idea could

have originated and the feat been accomplished only in an age like this, when men write their thoughts in Heaven's lightning, and with its swiftness transmit them unerringly to the furthestmost parts of the earth: when they themselves safely travel with the velocity of the whirlwind, and in their wanderings for pastime, keep pace with the tempest. Yet simple as the achievement may appear, to those who possess a knowledge of the numerous facilities which modern discoveries in Science and the Arts have placed at the command of Genius, to enable it to perfect its creations, it is worthy of observation, that the very meanest of the mechanical contrivances employed in the construction of this wonderful edifice, exhibits the successful result of antecedent years of ingenious effort successively directed to give to it its completest form and adaptability to the specific use for which it was required; whilst each stage of its history would present a not unfaithful picture of the state of civilization at any particular period of it that might be selected for the inquiry. Thus, taken either in its details or as a whole, the Industrial Palace, displaying as it does in most skilful combination all that is excellent in mechanism with what is most novel in the employment of material, may justly be regarded as the last and the happiest application of Science and the Arts to the purposes of man, and to the increased requirements of an advanced and refined condition of society.

As it is proposed that the Exhibition shall present specimens of every article on which human ingenuity can be exercised; the raw material as dug out of the bowels of the earth, or as gathered from its surface, and the same in its several and various stages of manufacture, until it has assumed the most perfect form, for particular uses, into which handicraft can fashion it, or the most elegant appearance that modern refinement exacts: and as the products and the industry of all nations, rude or civilized, will have their allotted place: the mind will realize, at a glance, the extent of material obligations which the peoples of the earth lie under to one another; and the result must be, on the part of all, a higher appreciation of that state of affairs which most contributes to secure a ready and an undisturbed inter-national intercourse and exchange of commodities.

To the less civilized nations, which may have their representatives at the Exhibition, this spectacle will appear invested with a peculiar and solemn interest. Whilst a contemplation of the marvellous achievements of human ingenuity and skill, and of the perfection to which the machinery of labour has attained, will inspire them with more elevated ideas of the civilization of our days, and awaken them to an enlarged knowledge of its requirements, it cannot fail to incite them to greater activity in the wide field of industry. They will perceive opening, on every side, fresh channels for the products they can supply;

and the increasing wants of the communities of the world will furnish them with cogent incentives to improve their own natural resources, not less to meet the augmenting demands from foreign parts, than as a means of procuring for themselves additional comforts, new and varied luxuries, or extended opportunities of self-advancement.

Nor ought the display of articles of Aboriginal industry to be without deep interest to the enlightened and the refined. If they dwell upon the scanty contributions of nations which, notwithstanding a comparatively lengthened intercourse with the civilized, are scarcely yet emerging from actual barbarism, it must be to admire the success with which the slenderest resources have been turned to account by unaided native ingenuity and perseverance; at the taste in design displayed by beings uninstructed by Science or uninspired by Art; and at the delicacy of finish which the rudest of fingers wielding the rudest of tools have imparted to the roughest fabrics.

It may chance, too, that a livelier sympathy will be hereby awakened in behalf of those branches of the great human family, which an impious philosophy has declared that Providence has predestinated civilization shall annihilate; and an impulse be given to the benevolence that seeks to liberate the bondsman, and to ameliorate the condition of the free. To entire classes of them we are indebted for numerous necessities and luxuries which their labour alone privileges us to enjoy; and indirectly to it also, for the majority of those improvements in machinery that enable the looms of Lancashire to clothe the population of the world.

And indeed, who shall estimate the influence upon modern civilization which the culture of that one simple plant has had, of which the produce, wrought and woven, forms the staple of our manufactures and exports! Upon no other production of nature has man expended so large an amount of ingenuity, to devise the means of increasing its usefulness and of extending its benefits to the masses. In the prosecution of this task, the highest powers of his mind have been evoked; the most elevated qualities of his nature been called into exercise: and in the startling results these have achieved, are recorded the most transcendent triumphs of his genius. We are not a century removed from the days of the distaff, spindle, and wheel, when the native spinners and weavers on the banks of the Ganges held a secure monopoly in those fabrics which we now supply to the inhabited world; and when their proficiency in this particular branch of the manufactures surpassed the utmost skill of our artisans, and, added to the low cost of production, defied competition. Nevertheless, but for the pressing necessity of devising some mode of successfully competing with this Aboriginal industry, we might still lack those complicated mechanical contrivances, which, by their economy of hand-labour, and their rapi-

dity and perfection of production, enable us to use up nearly the whole of the raw material grown in the two hemispheres, and not only to supplant all rivals nearer home, but to undersell in its own markets, that very native labour to which this new branch of commerce owes its existence.

How vast the change, since the illiterate but pains-taking and inventive Lancashire weaver constructed the labour-saving machine, which inaugurated that brilliant era in our manufactural history illustrated by the names of Arkwright and Crompton, Cartwright and Roberts, and a minor host of similar intellects! How gigantic the strides we have made, as a nation, since the impulse was thus given to create that wonderful system of machinery which has wrought so important a revolution in our commercial relations with remote lands and peoples, and been instrumental in improving, in a degree not less striking, the domestic policy which regulates the happiness of our working population, and is so intimately connected with its elevation.

May those who have disciplined their minds to derive impressive lessons from the monitions of minor incidents and facts; who, in tracing effects to their remoter causes, have attained to a more steadfast conviction of the over-ruling wisdom of the Creator's arrangements, and to a clearer perception of the harmony of His laws, not deem the passing thought cast away that shall be bestowed upon these much-despised and neglected children of toil—kindred in the one blood common to all the nations of the earth—and upon the important part they have played, and do still play, in the history of the development of the human intellect and of the civilization of the world.

But if positive advantages from this Exhibition of the World's Industry may be anticipated by those sections of the universal family of mankind whose primitive habits, fewer requirements, and greater wealth in the simple products essential to life merely, render them comparatively independent of civilized communities, it is manifest that this Festival must prove of absorbing importance to those nations which are bound together by the more powerful tie of a common interest, originating in their factitious wants, acquired tastes, luxurious customs, and ever-increasing necessities: the accidents incidental to a refined state of society, and in a greater or a minor degree inseparable from it. To them, Commerce is the vital element not less of their social than of their political existence. They cannot return to a simple mode of life, without speedily relapsing into original barbarism; nor, therefore, discontinue to trade without imminent danger of a two-fold annihilation. Hence an imperious necessity impels them to unceasing activity in all those branches of industry upon which the maintenance of their commercial prosperity depends; exciting them to undertake enterprises of the greatest magnitude, with a view to create new

markets for the exchange of their commodities, and to discover new sources whence to derive a more abundant supply of those articles which constitute the bulk of the national consumption, and which long use has converted into national necessities. It being demonstrable, then, that the most refined nations are least independent of one another, a scheme like the one under notice, which promises to exhibit at one view, and in the most palpable manner, the actual extent of their reciprocal obligations, may be asserted to possess intrinsic claims upon their consideration; nor can it fail to imbue them, in the highest degree, with those grateful sentiments which must flow from a deepened consciousness of a mutual dependence. It must also result in suddenly awakening their self-interest to the perfect estimation of the calamitous inconveniences a cessation or an interruption of the supplies of ordinary commodities would entail. They will therefore perceive it to be imperative upon them to seek to consolidate the bond of inter-national harmony, with a view to the permanent reciprocation and the wider diffusion of those necessities, comforts, and luxuries that tend so largely to augment individual happiness, and the production of which is the principal element in the improvement of mankind, in the elevation of character, and in the advancement of the race.

The legitimate end of Commerce being to diffuse the products of nature and of art amongst the inhabitants of the globe, no project could be better calculated to promote that end, than one which will exhibit the science of cheap production, in its completest form, and at the same time open a field for the comparison of our own manufactures with those of foreign countries, not only in respect of quality, but of cost. The benefits of such a comparison will be mutual, and must manifestly tend to the general advantage; for as each nation will be found displaying its peculiar excellence in some special manufacture or particular combination of art, so in other branches in which it may fall short of superiority, will each enjoy the most favourable opportunity of inspecting the masterpieces of handicraft, and of thus laying a foundation for future improvements. Hence, each will feel stimulated by a commendable ambition to surpass its rival in elegance, or to excel it in usefulness; and the most enterprising will be induced to bring into operation, on a more extensive scale, the resources of Science or the appliances of the Arts, with a view to the producing of superior articles at less cost, and of thus placing the acquisition of them within the means of the many.

But this is not the only beneficial result to be anticipated from so signal an opportunity of instituting industrial national comparisons. Those who are the most deeply interested in supplying the masses with necessary commodities, and therefore to whose enterprise cheap labour and cheap means of transport are an essential element of success, if they per-

ceive themselves to be struggling against impediments to fair competition, will be led, from obvious motives, closely to investigate the causes which may seem to have necessitated the imposition of burdens upon industry and restrictions upon trade, and which may yet be in operation to prevent their removal. Nor could an investigation of this comprehensive nature, involving suggestions for the equitable regulation of the interests of the most important sections of the community, namely, the producing classes, fail to commend itself favourably to the serious attention of those who might be charged with the responsibility of legislation. The permanent prosperity and greatness of any country are intimately associated with the freest development of its resources; wherefore it becomes the imperative duty of the guardians of the national welfare, to foster domestic industry and encourage its expansion, by adopting such measures as, upon mature deliberation, may be deemed best calculated to place the native producer nearer upon an equality with his foreign rival, and thus enable him to carry on a successful and an honourable competition.

It is not to be denied, that the expansive tendencies of the age point to the accomplishment of this end, less by the imposition or the continuance of restrictive duties upon foreign products and manufactures, than by such a judicious re-adjustment of the public burdens as shall render practicable, timely remissions of the imposts upon raw material and articles of consumption, with a view to the cheapening of the necessaries of life, of facilitating production, and of thus augmenting the demand for wrought commodities. The perpetuation of national monopolies by fiscal protection, appertains to the exclusive system of the past, which fostered inter-national jealousies, and raised barriers to the union of nations. The more enlightened and comprehensive policy of the present is based upon the nobler principle of the universal brotherhood of mankind and the common interest of peoples; and the mighty scheme of an Industrial Congress, convened in a temple consecrated by the united labour of the world's children, will auspiciously inaugurate the dawn of that new era in their history which was foretold by the ancient wisdom of inspiration.

From the consideration of measures for the encouragement of industry and the extension of commerce, naturally arising from the contemplation of so vast an assemblage of their combined and varied achievements, the grateful mind will be moved to dwell inquiringly upon the condition of the labouring classes, with feelings of deep and quickened interest in their welfare, and with an earnest desire to promote their social and moral elevation. Indeed, the practical philosophy of the day has not been slow to recognise the existence of a fundamental connexion between the morality of the people and the domestic tranquillity of empires, and to derive, from passing events,

the impressive admonition, that inaction or even indifference in matters so closely allied, is pregnant with evils of the greatest magnitude. Yet, whilst the efficacy of education to restrain has been triumphantly proved, and strenuous exertions have been made to extend its advantages to the bulk of the population, experience has also demonstrated that its results can be only partial, and that a radical moral improvement in the masses cannot reasonably be expected, so long as they remain exposed at home to the corrupting influences of squalor and uncleanness: the sources of self-degradation and discontent, the chief incentives to crime, and the remote cause alike of political as of social disorganisation. The most exalted in rank, and the most distinguished for philanthropy, have therefore religiously devoted an increasing share of attention, to the maturing of plans for augmenting the comforts of those classes, on whose general contentment and happiness the stability of the social structure has been ascertained to depend. Facilities for acquiring habits of cleanliness have been extended to them, by the erection, in convenient localities, of establishments which combine with the completest accommodation, the advantages of privacy and economy: advantages which have been secured only by the happy adaptation to the vulgar exigencies of domestic life, of those wonderful combinations of modern science and mechanical skill which the Industrial Exhibition is intended to illustrate on so imposing a scale. With a view also to remove another of the fruitful sources of depravity, crime, and early moral contamination—evils inseparable from the violation of the common decencies of life, by the promiscuous crowding of families into unsuitable abodes—the same active benevolence has projected plans for improving the dwellings of the humbler classes; seeking not less to improve them morally, through the influence of correct example, than to enable them, by association, individually to economize their scanty means, whilst enjoying the benefits of an increased general expenditure. Nor does it form one of the least interesting features of the Exhibition, that the most illustrious personage in the realm, next to Royalty, has deemed it no derogation of dignity to submit to universal inspection a model and a plan of his own, for the furtherance of a system which is calculated to confer the most signal benefits upon the very humblest of the community.

It is by such proofs of solicitude for the welfare of the people, more than by the shadowy glories of military conquest, that Sovereigns secure the affections of their subjects, attach them to their institutions, and consolidate the foundations of empires.

But apart from results of this character, it may be hoped, too, that the admiration which so splendid a collection of the products of national industry is calculated to inspire, will not prove barren of ad-

vantages to those whose invention has wrought so many marvels. Indeed, in this her own temple, Genius will, by the mouth of her hand-maid Labour, urge her special claims to encouragement with an irresistible eloquence; and in the presence of the assembled nations, whilst pointing to her countless triumphs, and thus forcibly reminding the world how deeply civilization is indebted to her efforts, will demand for her sons the removal of those vexatious obstructions that fiscal egotism has unwisely placed in the paths along which they must ever toil to distinction.

Moreover, by bringing the foregoing facts home to every capacity, it will lead all to appreciate the advantages of domestic tranquillity not less than those of inter-national peace. It will impress upon the understanding of the working classes especially, and with peculiar force, that although labour possesses a self-maintaining dignity of its own, it becomes powerless to assume its proper exalted rank, or to claim its just remuneration, during periods of internal commotion; and that when national productiveness is paralysed by such calamities, the national prosperity receives a check, and the national wealth ceases to benefit the producers of it, because labour falls the first victim. Thus, whilst they will be confirmed in the knowledge of their power as the sources of national wealth and prosperity; and whilst this knowledge will prompt them duly to estimate their own importance as the fount of legislative authority, and from this fact to deduce that it is their right to exercise a large share of influence in the legislation of their country, they will also acquire the certain knowledge, that sudden radical changes for their own political amelioration may not be effected at the expense of the general tranquillity, nor without anxious deliberation and a due regard to existing interests. At the same time, Legislators will likewise be influenced by similar feelings arising from kindred reflections. They will perceive that throughout the world, as the masses of the people become more enlightened, they assert their right to an extension of their political privileges, and they will therefore discover the necessity of making timely concessions to well-founded popular demands, as the only means of forestalling revolutions and violent social convulsions.

In conclusion: it may be argued—and perhaps with some show of truth—that the advantages which it is anticipated will accrue to the world at large from the Exhibition of the Industry of its people, and that the new impulses it is expected to impart to Commerce, the Arts, and the Manufactures, are merely speculative: but it may safely be predicated that the moral influence it is calculated to exercise upon inter-national concord cannot be doubted, and can scarcely be over-estimated. It will show that there is no nation so insignificant, either on account of the limited extent of its natural resources, or of the rudeness of its

artificial products, but it forms an essential link in the great chain of inter-national unity and dependence; nor is there the nation which, being thus aroused to a keener appreciation of this truth, will not become inspired with a more dignified consciousness of its own importance, and feel its latent energies and aspirations aroused to renewed and nobler efforts. On the other hand, there is no nation so advanced but it will perceive that a bright career of progress yet lies open before it, in pursuing which it must not only draw the less favoured in its footsteps, but impart to them new and worthier impulses; and this conviction cannot fail to stimulate its benevolence to aid them on the way, as one of the surest means of securing its own more rapid advancement.

It is demonstrable, therefore, that this spectacle is pre-eminently calculated to encourage, on the part of the several nations of the world, a stronger desire to form closer intimacies. It will effectually withdraw their thoughts from brooding over those ungrateful subjects which have, for so long a period, proved a fertile source of jealousies and heart-burnings; preventing the healthy development of national resources and industry; raising barriers to the extension of inter-national commerce; provoking sanguinary conflicts by sea and land; and entailing the desolation of countries, the impoverishment of peoples, and the overthrow of kingdoms. It will, moreover, so palpably exhibit the more lasting glory and renown to be acquired by honourable emulation in the field of labour, that they will find in these, the most cogent incentives to engage in a noble struggle to outvie one another in the cultivation of those sciences, and the perfecting of those arts, which, whilst they humanize and refine the individual, likewise exalt and dignify the nation.

Finally: the inter-national mind thus becoming deeply imbued with sentiments of a kindly nature, and its manifestations being all in favour of progress, the rulers of the world will be the more forcibly reminded that the increase of national wealth, and the development of national interests and national influence, depend upon fostering the tendencies of the age, and ministering to its requirements; and that political schemes for national aggrandisement, to be permanently successful, must be regulated with a becoming regard to inter-national prosperity, and be based upon a scale commensurate with its exactions, and in strict accordance with the immutable principles of universal equity.

LONDON, 1st May, 1851.